

# SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

IMPROVING IOWA'S WATER QUALITY IS MORE THAN A ONE-PERSON EFFORT.  
DNR, DSC AND NRCS ARE HERE TO HELP THROUGHOUT YOUR PROJECT.

If you've never organized a public meeting or aren't sure about the best conservation practices to use on a piece of land, don't worry. You don't have to go it alone when it comes to figuring out your local water quality problems, assessing those problems, planning your watershed project, or even when crafting your public relations efforts.

Through watershed improvement grants, help from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is available from the planning stages of your project to completion.

## PROJECT GUIDANCE

You can have confidence knowing your project is headed in the right direction with professional guidance and advice from DNR, DSC and NRCS.

An answer to your everyday project question or help for bigger planning issues is right in your backyard. DSC regional watershed coordinators work in the field with watershed projects on assessments, grant applications and answer day-to-day questions. Even before you have

an established project, the regional coordinators can help develop and plan your project, working with you on a Watershed Planning Assistance Grant.

You can also look to DNR Watershed Improvement project officers for specialized assistance with DNR grants. If you receive grant funding from the DNR, your project officer can work with you on project planning, development and oversight, and contract management. The project officers work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and can answer questions on DNR-EPA grant funds. If you need help with project development, one-on-one advice on writing grant applications, or a review of your grant application prior to final submittal, contact your project officer. Project officers will visit you in the field at least twice a year to help you reach your watershed goals.

Please see our staff insert for contact information for regional coordinators and project officers.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSISTANCE

Key to a project's success is garnering awareness of the project in your community and getting your neighbors involved. Your project's information and education efforts (often called "I&E") may seem a daunting task if public relations is unfamiliar territory, but help on your day-to-day I&E projects is available.

An information specialist can assist in creating public relations plans and I&E campaigns, as well as helping craft and review individual pieces, like presentations and news releases. Watershed projects also receive a copy of the *I&E Guidebook*, a how-to on creating communications materials, organizing events, creating an overall public relations plan, and more. Please see our "staff" insert for contact information.

**Please flip this sheet over to learn about technical tools you can use in the field.**



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## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

You can improve water quality – and we have the technology to help. That technology, from hand-held GIS (geographic information systems) units to individual assistance, is available from the DNR, DSC and NRCS. Conserve your project funds by working with us to answer your technical questions or to borrow new tools for field assessments.

DNR, DSC and NRCS can assist with assessments in the watershed, which help determine what the problems are and where they're coming from. These include stream, gully, land cover, livestock and other assessments. Watershed groups can borrow tools from the DNR, like tablet computers and hand-held GIS units, to complete these assessments.

### *Your partner in the field*

Technical assistance is more than just the newest tools. It's also the experience and guidance of regional coordinators, project officers and technical staff, who can work with you to decide which tools can help, teach you how to use them and help you manage the data once it's collected.

### *Stream assessment tools*

The stream assessment process known as RASCAL, or Rapid Assessment of Stream Conditions Along Length, can

help you assess problem areas in and near streams in your watershed.

To help with stream assessments, watershed projects can use hand-held GIS units to collect valuable information as you walk in or near the stream. With this data, you can identify priority areas for conservation practices.

### *Watershed land cover tools*

Knowing the current conditions on the landscape is just as valuable as knowing what's happening in a stream or river. Assessing watershed land cover can be a challenging task, but tablet computers can help ease the data collection process. With these computers, about the same size as a notebook, you can electronically enter land cover information directly into a GIS system right in the field.

During the assessment, you can mark the locations of existing conservation practices as well as gullies, potential problem areas and other points of interest. Knowing locations of existing practices allows for increased accuracy when determining soil erosion problems and siting conservation practices.

### *Sediment delivery calculator*

Watershed projects can also use the Sediment Delivery Calculator, a computer model that estimates how much sediment is reaching a lake or stream. The calculator can help staff develop a watershed plan and can assess the effectiveness of conservation practice options. In addition, you can use results to report project accomplishments to your community and funding agencies.

### *Energy savings tools*

Online tools can help you guide local farmers and landowners on how they can reduce their energy costs. The tools project energy savings based on management and operational changes and can be found at <http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov>

More information on technical assistance and tools is available from DNR project officers and DSC regional watershed coordinators. See our staff insert for contacts.

